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ABSTRACT

Fifty randomly selected adults, who had attained their high school diploma thrcugh Surry Community College's (SCC's) General Educational Development (GED) program in 1978, were surveyed in 1980 to determine: (1) the usefulness of GED participation in gaining employment and in obtaining promotions and salary increases: (2) the percentage of GED graduates who were enrolled in a post-secondary institution: and (3) the usefulness of the GED program in preparing students for future academic success in terms of college grade point average (GPA). Major findings, based on 36 responses, indicate that 48.84% of the graduates were employed full-time: 11.63% were employed part-time: 9.30% were unemployed: and 20.93% were in college. Of the employed graduates, 34.62% indicated that the GED program was helpful in gaining employment, 15.38% said the program helped them obtain a promotion, and 19.23% related their GED participation to salary increases. The nine GED graduates who were enrolled in college earned a mean GPA of 2.92, which compares favorably with the mean GPA of 2.75 earned by high school graduates enrolled at SCC. The study report details the survey methodology and reviews the literature dealing with GED graduate follow-up analyses. A bibliography and the questionnaire are appended. (JP)

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An Educational and Employment Growth Study of General Educational Development (GED) Graduates of Surry Community College

Claude V. Ayers

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A MAJOR APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECT
PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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Abstract of a Major Applied Research Project presented to Nova University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

AN EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH STUDY OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) GRADUATES OF SURRY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By

Claude V. Ayers

October 1980

Since its establishment in 1965, Surry Community College (SCC) has offered an instructional program for adult non-high school graduates who want to complete high school by passing the General Educational Development (GED) Test. SCC has provided this program through its individualized instructional learning laboratories. While the number of adults graduating through the learning laboratory program has increased almost every year, only a small percentage of non-high school graduate adults are enrolled in the program. Adult non-high school graduates, educators, and employers often question the value of the GED certificate. This study addressed issues regarding the value of the GED certificate and the individualized learning laboratory program through the following research questions:

1. Does graduation from the GED program help adults gain employment or receive job promotions or salary increases?

2. What percentage of GED graduates include post-high school studies in their plans? How many of these adults plan to enroll for post-high school studies at SCC?

3. Does the GED program prepare students for post-high school studies? Are GED graduates who enroll in college courses successful students?

I employed the survey method to obtain information on the educational and employment growth of GED graduates. The survey was sent to a random selection of fifty GED graduates chosen from approximately 125 adults who completed high school through the individualized learning laboratory program at SCC during the 1977-1978 academic year. Thirty-six (83.7 percent) of the deliverable survey forms were completed and returned for use in this study. Study results were presented in tables and evaluated through appropriate statistical methods.

I based the following conclusions on study results:

1. Graduation from the GED program at SCC was beneficial in assisting 34.62 percent of the employed GED graduates to gain employment. The GED program assisted 15.38 percent of the employed respondents in obtaining a promotion. Completion of the GED program aided 19.23 percent of the employed GED respondents in receiving salary increases.

2. The GED graduates who reported enrollment in post-high school studies held a mean mid-point grade point average of 2.92 (C+). Twenty-five percent of the GED

respondents were enrolled at SCC for post-high school studies and twenty-five percent reported that they expect to enroll at SCC for post-high school studies on some future date.

I offered the following recommendations:

1. College administrators, college instructors, college counselors, and college learning laboratory coordinators should emphasize through speeches, news media, and college publications the potential worth of the GED program on the educational and employment growth of non-high school graduate adults in the service area of SCC.

2. College administrators should continue to improve the instructional program and educational services for adult non-high school graduates at SCC through both annual program evaluation and financial support.

3. Learning laboratories for GED completion should be located in as many different sites in the college service area as needs require.

4. SCC should implement an active and continuing program for recruitment of both adult non-high school graduates for the GED program and GED graduates for college-level work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Surry Community College (SCC) was established in 1965. The college offers programs designed to meet the various educational needs of the adult population in the college service area of Surry and Yadkin counties. One of the college's most important functions is providing an educational program for more than fifteen thousand non-high school graduate adults. The continuing education division has developed an instructional laboratory designed to provide adult high school dropouts opportunity to continue studies on an individualized level. Hours scheduled for laboratory study permit adults, who often have a variety of work schedules and family responsibilities, a choice of hours to use laboratory materials and instructional services. The laboratory coordinator helps adults entering the program plan study or learning schedules according to their individual needs. Students are given placement tests designed to assist the coordinator in placing students at appropriate levels in five subject areas. There is no specified number of hours required for students to work in the laboratory to complete the program. SCC encourages students obtaining a satisfactory score on unit tests in English, social

studies, literature, natural sciences, and mathematics to take the General Educational Development (GED) Test. Students achieving satisfactory scores on the GED Test, as determined by the North Carolina State Board of Education, receive a high school equivalency certificate.

Prospective students, employers, and even educators have often questioned the value of the individualized instructional laboratory and the GED certificate. Lack of knowledge regarding the importance of the program for its graduates has hampered recruitment for the individualized instructional laboratory. Scant information exists regarding the educational and employment growth of GED graduates at SCC. This study provides answers to questions regarding the value of the GED certificate and the individualized learning laboratory program.

Background and Significance

Americans' technological skills and comprehension reflect a major characteristic of the United States and an important national resource. Technology demonstrates an ability to utilize materials and processes to develop more goods or services for consumers and further improve technological processes. When Europeans first discovered and settled this country, they found vast amounts of wealth: timber, metals, rich soil, water, and petroleum. At that time, the country's resources supported less than one million Indians. The same amount of land now sustains more

than 220 million people at the highest level of material consumption in history.[1]

This nation's rapid growth and the rise in the standard of living proved possible through development and implementation of technology. A technologically centered society cannot operate advanced levels of technology without a high level of literacy. Rapid technological growth creates new demands for increased levels of individual educational attainment. The nation cannot advance indefinitely if millions of citizens lack basic educational skills necessary for their economic and civic growth. Increasing costs of welfare programs for the unskilled and uneducated demonstrate how the lack of a high level of educational attainment produces a negative influence on national growth.

The number of undereducated, underemployed, and unemployed represents a problem for the nation in terms of continued growth in technology. Employment statistics indicate that high school dropouts are unemployed almost twice as often as graduates, and the outlook is worsening every year.[2] The growing need for developing new energy sources as the 1980s begin exemplifies the necessity of adult literacy. The 1980 census is expected to reveal only

[1]James W. Thornton, The Community Junior College (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1972), p. 20.

[2]Karl J. Borden, Adult High School Diploma Programs: An Emerging Alternative (ERIC ED 106 463), p. 9.

small gains, if any, in educating the approximately thirty-five percent of the population over twenty-five years of age with less than an eighth grade education.[3]

The history of American education outlines the importance men and women place on education. Development of the community college in the United States underscores the belief that education benefits a free and productive society; however, the public's willingness to pay for educational services has decreased in recent years as state and local taxes have increased to meet the rising cost of this education. Taxpayers and legislators voice increased emphasis on accountability in education.[4]

Thornton indicates that the community college can answer, in part, the problem of increased costs. He states that since community colleges are located within driving distance of most students, thereby eliminating the need for housing facilities, the community college can provide instructional services for students at a reduced cost. According to Thornton, the community college's emphasis on instruction makes it an appropriate institution for preparation for advanced study or employment.

National concern for upgrading the educational level of American citizens has helped increase the number of

[3]Thornton, pp. 8-11.

[4]Myron Lieverman, "The Tenure Controversy," Journal of Higher Education, 56 (March 1975), p. 450.

community and junior colleges in the United States from approximately a dozen in 1900 to over 1200 in 1980. The labor market's national trend away from unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, characteristic of the type jobs usually held by the undereducated, is responsible for encouraging rapid enrollment growth of two-year colleges.[5]

In 1957 the North Carolina General Assembly increased efforts to meet North Carolinians' educational needs by passing the Community College Act. This act provided for two-year college programs in liberal arts. In 1963 the state expanded the purposes of the community college and technical institute system

> to provide for the establishment, organization, and administration of a system of educational institutions throughout the state offering courses of two-year college parallel, technical, vocational, and adult education programs to serve as a legislative charter for such institutions, and to authorize the support thereof. The major purpose of each and every institution operating under the provision of the Charter, shall be and shall continue to be the offering of vocational and technical education and training, and of basic high school level, academic education needed in order to profit from vocational and technical education for students who are beyond the compulsory age limit of the public school system and who have left the public schools.[6]

With passage of General Statute 115A in 1963, the number of community colleges and technical institutes grew to fifty-seven institutions.[7] The North Carolina state legislature

[5]Thornton, pp. 19-22.

[6]North Carolina General Statutes 1964, Ch. 115A, art. 1.

[7]Educational Guide (Raleigh, NC: Department of Community Colleges, 1977-1978).

has approved the fifty-eighth institution for funding. Surry Community College is one of the institutions comprising the North Carolina community college system.

The citizens of Surry County revealed their interest in a community college for the county in 1960. The initial process began when the Mount Airy Lions Club appointed a committee to study the possibility of establishing a community college. Two years later other civic organizations throughout the county expressed their interest. This concern led to a county-wide meeting held in Dobson, the county seat, to discuss procedures required to establish a community college. The community college concept was endorsed by the Surry County Board of Commissioners, the Surry County Board of Education, the Elkin Board of Education, and the Mount Airy Board of Education. The Surry County Board of Commissioners appointed a community college steering committee 5 August 1963. The committee worked with local officials in preparation for requesting a comprehensive community college for Surry County. Officials presented a request for a community college to the North Carolina State Board of Education in December 1963. The board approved the request in January 1964.

The citizens of Surry County approved a bond issue in 1964. The monies from this tax levy helped purchase land and construct three buildings to house SCC. Adult Basic Education (ABE) and high school completion through the

learning laboratory were two of the first educational services offered by the college when it opened in 1965.[8]

Early in the college's development, the trustees, administrators, and instructors adopted the following statement of purpose: "The fundamental purpose of Surry Community College is to enable citizens of our area to increase their skills and knowledge. 'To each his farthest star' is the appropriate motto." The college's responsibilities outlined in the Surry Community College Catalog's statement of purpose follow:

1. To provide, within the statutory and fiscal limits of the college, programs and instruction which will give each student the opportunity to start where he is and progress as far as he can.
2. To provide, through open door admissions, placement in programs adapted to the student's preparation and leading to his educational and occupational objectives.
3. To assure that when each student has completed a program he will have the skill and knowledge to meet the demand of the job for which he has prepared or to transfer successfully to another institution.
4. To offer educational programs appropriate to the continuing needs of the people of Surry County and the surrounding area.
5. To develop effective ways of evaluating the college program and to make appropriate reports to the public.[9]

[8]"Statement of Purpose," Surry Community College Catalog (Dobson, NC: Surry Community College, 1977-1978), p. 7.

[9]"Statement of Purpose," SCC Catalog, p. 7.

The objectives of the individualized learning laboratory and this research project relate directly to the objectives of Surry Community College. Objectives of the individualized learning laboratory at SCC include offering individuals opportunity to start where they are and progress as far as they can, providing placement and preparation leading to educational and occupational objectives, assuring that students completing a program will have the skills and knowledge to meet job demands, offering appropriate programs, evaluating programs, and making appropriate reports to the public.

Hundreds of adults have used the individualized learning laboratory at SCC since its development. During the 1978-1979 academic school year, more than 150 adults completed high school through the instructional laboratories at SCC. The success of the individualized instructional laboratory program is measured to a large extent by the number of adults graduating from the program each year. This number points to some degree of success. The thousands of non-high school graduate adults not working toward a high school certificate and the number of students who drop out of public school each year in the college service area, however, often overshadow the program's success. Lack of knowledge regarding the importance of this program to its graduates hampers recruitment for the individualized instructional laboratories. Scant information exists regarding potential educational and employment growth of

GED graduates at SCC. Potential students, employers, and even educators often question the worth of the learning laboratory program and the GED certificate. A study of GED graduates' educational and vocational growth should contribute significant assessment information.

From a national view 57 million Americans sixteen years of age or older have left public school prior to completing high school.[10] Of this number, approximately one million live in North Carolina. Surry and Yadkin counties have more than 15 thousand adults who have not graduated from high school.

The large number of undereducated adults presents a major obstacle to individual and business income growth in Surry and Yadkin counties. Often, these undereducated adults are unable to take advantage of vocational and technical community college programs designed to upgrade their skills. This group represents a considerable number of potential students who could provide a balancing effect in the 1980s on the projected decline of public high school graduates from the SCC service area. Professional literature stresses the need for community college programs for nontraditional students. John E. Roueche and others emphasize the need to widen the door for student admission,

[10]Lutaf Dhanidina and William S. Griffith, "Cost and Benefits of Delayed High School Completion," Adult Education, 25 (Summer 1975), p. 217.

insure better teaching, and retain students after admission. Roueche states that

> the open door policy of the community junior college implies acceptance of the concept of universal higher education. In accepting this idea the community college thus becomes committed to provide an education for all high school graduates and others who can profit from instruction.[11]

Roueche, in A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn, indicates that public junior community colleges should become more involved in admitting, holding, and instructing more groups of people. Roueche states that "increased educational opportunities for all has become a social demand."[12]

Many studies on the GED graduate emphasize the need to serve the segment of the population comprised of adult non-high school graduates. Most of these studies point to the need for additional research regarding the educational and employment development of GED graduates. This study answers some of the questions often asked about the educational and employment success of GED graduates at Surry Community College.

Research Questions

I employ the following research questions to assess growth of Surry Community College GED graduates for the 1977-1978 academic school year:

[11]John E. Roueche, Salvage, Redirection or Custody? (Washington, DC: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1968), p. vii.

[12]John E. Roueche, A Modest Proposal: Students Can Learn (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1972), p. 2.

1. Does graduation from the GED program help adults gain employment or receive job promotions or salary increases?

2. What percentage of GED graduates include post-high school studies in their plans? How many of these adults plan to enroll for post-high school studies at Surry Community College?

3. Does the GED program prepare students for post-high school studies? Are GED graduates who enroll in college courses successful students?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions clarify terms used in this study:

General Educational Development (GED) Test. A battery of five comprehensive examinations in the areas of English composition, social studies, natural sciences, literature, and mathematics.

General Educational Development Graduate. An individual who has achieved at least minimum required scores on the GED and has received a high school equivalency certificate (also referred to as Learning Laboratory Graduate or High School Completion Graduate).

Individualized Instructional Laboratory. A program of instructional strategies designed to accommodate individual learning differences (also referred to as the Learning Laboratory).

Individualized Instructional Laboratory Coordinator. A professional instructor trained to test, place, and assist adult students as their individual needs require (also referred to as the Learning Laboratory Coordinator).

Limitations and Assumptions

I do not attempt to establish equivalency in regard to backgrounds of individuals selected for this study. I do not consider the number of months of study or GED scores. I assume that the variety of backgrounds and experiences of the random selection of fifty percent of GED graduates for the 1977-1978 academic school year characterizes the population for that year. Further, I assume that the 1977-1978 academic school year population is characteristic and representative of graduates of previous years. I limit the study to a random selection of Surry Community College GED graduates for one academic year. I selected the 1977-1978 academic school year because I believed that sufficient time had elapsed to measure the employment and educational growth of the graduates and that a high rate of survey return would be obtained from such a recent academic school year. The survey does not show long range effects on educational and vocational growth.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of related literature reveals several significant studies dealing with GED graduates. William Rogers and Zanazlari J. Henry conducted a follow-up study of graduates from Middlesex County Vocational High School in New Jersey. The study focuses, in part, on graduates' educational and occupational experiences. This study's results show that eighty-four percent of the respondents were employed full time. Eighty-six percent expressed satisfaction with their jobs. Approximately seventy-eight percent of the respondents were earning $15,000 or more each year. Rogers and Henry conclude that the school needed no major changes.[1] A study by John C. Salas and Edmund Palleria on occupational and career education patterns of 2,000 Hamden High School (Connecticut) graduates offers the following results significant for the study at SCC:

[1]William Rogers and Zanazlari J. Henry, After Twenty-five Years: A Twenty-five Year Follow-up Study of Middlesex County Vocational and Technical High School Graduates of the Class of June 1953 (New Brunswick, NJ: New Jersey State Department of Education, 1979), pp. 68-72.

1. The graduates of this school were college-oriented individuals.

2. The graduates were not achieving their post-high school occupational endeavors.

3. The graduates were achieving their post-high school education or training endeavors.[2]

Reid F. Creech and George C. Copa conducted similar follow-up studies regarding employment and educational growth of traditional high school graduates. Creech's nationwide survey of the 1972 graduating class eighteen months after graduation reveals that sixty-five percent were unemployed and eight percent were laid off. Forty-two percent were enrolled in a college or university.[3] Copa's study involved seventy-seven selected high schools in Minnesota. He surveyed over seventeen thousand former students and received a response of eighty-two percent. Sixty percent were enrolled in post-secondary education.[4] Studies by William B. Richardson and others on employment patterns and factors influencing earnings of vocational

[2]John C. Salas and Edmund Palleria, An Analysis of Graduates' Occupational Patterns as Aid to Local Planning for Vocational and Career Education (Washington, DC: Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education, 1977), pp. 42-50.

[3]Reid F. Creech et al., Comparative Analysis of Post-secondary Occupational and Educational Outcomes for the High School Class of 1972 (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1977), pp. 440-465.

[4]George C. Copa et al., Status of Former High School Students: Procedure for Local Assessment (Minneapolis: Minnesota State Department of Education, 1975), pp. 25-39.

high school graduates show that the type of high school training produced little effect on either student earnings or student vocational choice. William B. Richardson and Joan R. McFadden's findings in a study on employment patterns of vocational graduates follow:

1. A majority of the one thousand vocational graduates did seek employment.
2. Graduates who were employed in the vocational area of the high school vocational training did not make more money than did those working in nonrelated occupations.[5]

A second study by Richardson reveals that variables affecting earnings included sex, marital status, year of graduation, job satisfaction, and labor union membership. Major conclusions to this study follow:

1. Variables not directly associated with vocational training tend to have a greater influence on the earnings of vocational graduates than the vocational training he received.
2. The socioeconomic status of parents was not a significant influence on the level of earnings for their offspring.
3. The type of vocational training program completed by the graduate did not provide any conclusive relationship with earnings.[6]

[5]William B. Richardson and Joan R. McFadden, An Identification of Employment Patterns of Vocational Graduates of Indiana Secondary Schools (Lafayette: Indiana Department of Education, 1975), pp. 32-41.

[6]William B. Richardson, An Analysis of Factors Influencing the Earnings of Indiana High School Vocational Graduates (Lafayette: Indiana Department of Education, 1975), pp. 36-50.

Strategies designed to answer questions of accountability for increased expenditures of public funds for educational programs have not been limited to the vocational level of employability of graduates. In three years, 1975 through 1978, thirty-three states mandated specific minimum competencies for graduation from their public high schools. All remaining states either have minimum competency legislation pending or studies on competency testing under way.[7]

Robert L. Ekel's article, "The Case for Minimum Competency Testing," points out that minimum competency tests are not a recent development. He emphasizes that the professions of medicine, dentistry, law, and accountancy have employed minimum competency as a basis for certification or licensing for almost as many years as the professions' existence. He also emphasizes that demands for minimum competency tests, as indicated by other studies and observations, did not emerge from within the education establishment. According to Ekel, the demands originated with "disappointed employers, from disappointed parents, and even from some disappointed students."[8]

[7]Chris Pipho, "Minimum Competency Testing in 1978: A Look at State Standards," Phi Delta Kappan, 59 (May 1978), 585-588.

[8]Robert L. Ekel, "The Case for Minimum Competency Testing," Phi Delta Kappan, 59 (April 1978), 546.

This literature indicates clearly public concern for minimum educational levels which prepare students for advanced courses in post-high school studies, skilled occupations, and semi-skilled occupations.[9] The literature also indicates that the value of a high school diploma continues to concern employers, students, and parents. In view of public concern regarding the value of the traditional high school diploma, one can understand easily public concern over the value of the GED certificate. Perhaps this concern results from the limited information available to the general public regarding the purpose of the GED Test. The public needs additional information defining the GED and what it measures, explaining how the test is standardized, and evaluating employment and educational growth of GED graduates.

The GED consists of a battery of five comprehensive examinations in the areas of social studies, English composition, natural sciences, literature, and mathematics. The tests measure major generalizations, ideas, and intellectual skills at a level equal to that of graduates of four years of high school. According to General Education Development Testing Service, "emphasis is placed on intellectual power rather than detailed content and on the ability to comprehend exactly, evaluate critically, and

[9]William M. Revers, "The Politics of Literacy," Community College Review, 4 (Summer 1976), 65-70.

to think clearly in terms of the concepts and ideas."[10] Official GED testing centers are established under contract with the GED testing service of the Commission on Accreditation. These centers are available at locations authorized by state administrators of the GED testing program. The GED program helps adults determine their ability to score satisfactorily in the five test areas. The North Carolina State Board of Education requires an average standard score of 45 on each of the five tests--a score equivalent to the thirty-first percentile among high school seniors in the United States.[11] The minimum age for testing and receiving a GED certificate in North Carolina is eighteen years; however, appropriate public school officials may waiver this requirement for individuals age sixteen to eighteen.[12]

Officials standardized the GED by administering the test to a selection of high school seniors across the United States. They placed these scores in percentile ranks. A percentile rank of thirty-one was determined to be a standard score of 45. Thus, GED graduates in North

[10]General Educational Development Testing Service, Handbook for Official GED Centers (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1968), p. 2.

[11]Division of Continuing Education, North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, The Adult High School Program in North Carolina, 1978: A Report to the State Board of Education (Raleigh, NC: n.p., 1979), p. 1.

[12]The Adult High School Program in North Carolina, 1978, p. 1.

Carolina score no less than an average of the thirty-first percentile on the five test areas included in the GED Test.[13]

Paul L. Dressel and J. Schmid conducted a study to evaluate the validity of the GED examinations. Their study concludes that a large number of GED graduates in college and occupational settings ordinarily requiring a high school level education proved successful.[14] R. W. Tyler conducted a fact-finding study which examines information from a number of educational institutions. Tyler directed part of this study toward determining the GED's validity as an equivalency of the high school diploma in admission to higher education. Tyler concludes that large numbers of GED equivalency certificate holders succeeded in college and that the differences in their achievement compared with regular high school graduates proved small.[15]

Louis A. D'Amico's 1953 doctoral dissertation focuses on the academic success of GED graduates. His study

[13] The Adult High School Program in North Carolina, 1978, p. 1.

[14] Paul L. Dressel and J. Schmid, An Evaluation of the Tests of General Educational Development (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1951).

[15] R. W. Tyler, The Fact-finding Study of the Testing Program of the United States Armed Forces Institute (Washington, DC: Office of Armed Forces Information and Education, Department of Defense, 1954), n.p.

involved 307 graduates and an equal number of public high school graduates enrolled from 1946 to 1950. D'Amico reports that GED students progressing beyond the freshman year compared well in academic achievement with the high school graduates in the control group.[16]

Amiel T. Sharon conducted a study for the Educational Testing Service comparing grades of GED graduates with grades of public high school graduates enrolled in selected two-year and four-year institutions. Results follow:

> The results of the comparison indicated that 55 percent of the GED students had a lower average than that of all students at their college, while 45 percent had grades equal to or higher than those of the traditional students. This comparison tends to place the GED students at a disadvantage, because the mean GPA of all traditional students is based on a larger proportion of upper-level students than is the GED sample. (Upper-level students are likely to have higher GPA's than lower level students because of attrition of academically poor students.)[17]

Christian Pipho's 1965 study of GED graduates admitted to Colorado colleges from 1958 to 1962 reveals that the group's success was limited. His study indicates that

[16]Louis A. D'Amico, "The Comparative Achievement of Veterans Admitted to Indiana University on the Basis of General Educational Development Tests and a Selected Group of Other Indiana University Students," Diss. University of Indiana 1953, p. 64.

[17]Amiel T. Sharon, The Non-High-School-Graduate Adult in College and His Success as Predicted by the Tests of General Development (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1972), p. 8.

only nineteen percent had graduated by 1964.[18] Joseph C. Bledsoe expressed some reservations about GED graduates' ability to do college level work in College and University, 1953. His overall perceptions of GED graduates, however, are positive.[19]

Eugene Russell Roon's 1972 doctoral study reports comparisons made between GED entrant students and traditional high school graduates. Roon examined available student records at Metropolitan State College in Denver, Colorado for a seven-year period. His study reveals that regular high school graduates in the top thirty percent of their high school graduating class maintained the highest grade point averages compared with the GED entrant students who had the lowest overall grade point averages. Roon found, however, that when he eliminated all students whose grade point averages fell below 2.00, a comparison of the mean remaining grade point averages revealed no significant difference between the regular high school graduates and the GED graduates.[20]

[18]Christian Pipho, "The General Educational Development (GED) High School Equivalency Certificate Program in Colorado," Diss. Colorado State College 1967, pp. 3-5.

[19]Joseph C. Bledsoe, "Success of Non-High School Graduate (GED) Students in Three Southern Colleges," College and University, 28 (April 1953), 381-387.

[20]Eugene Russell Roon, "The Relationship Between Achievement Levels and the Mode of Admission of Students at Metropolitan State College, Denver, Colorado," Diss. University of Northern Colorado 1972, p. 25.

Sterlin C. Moore's study concludes that GED graduates are five times more likely to drop out of junior colleges than regular high school graduates. His study also concludes that GED graduates enroll for fewer credit hours than traditional high school graduates.[21]

Roy D. Albert's study of high school equivalency certificate holders states "that high school equivalency certificate holders are slightly less successful academically than high school graduates."[22] He also states that "many of the studies dealing with GED testees are concerned with describing their academic performance."[23] Albert suggests we need additional research regarding the success of GED graduates.

In 1973 Fay Byrd and others compared the educational success of GED recipients with traditional high school graduates at Wilkes Community College. This study was designed to reveal differences in reading placement scores or in grade point averages in freshman English or mathematics. This study involved thirty adult GED graduates and

[21]Sterlin C. Moore, "Some Comparisons Between GED Test Entrants and High School Graduates in Junior Colleges," Diss. University of Texas 1973, p. 105.

[22]Roy D. Albert, Jr., "A Study of High School Equivalency Certificate Holders Who Attended Bristol Community College Between 1969 and 1973," Diss. University of Northern Colorado 1975, p. 40.

[23]Albert, p. 40.

fifty randomly selected high school graduates enrolled at Wilkes Community College. The study concludes that there was no significant difference in the three areas tested.[24] My 1975 study on the GED graduate enrolled at Surry Community College, published in the Open Door, involved forty-nine GED graduates and a similar number of regular high school graduates selected at random from the student population during the 1973-74 academic year. The mean number of credit hours accumulated by the GED group was 42.81 compared with the mean of 25.48 credit hours for the traditional high school graduate. The total quality point averages of the GED group was 2.71 compared with 2.75 for traditional high school graduates. The study concludes that no significant difference existed in the grade point averages of the two groups.[25]

A study by Wallace K. Nave addresses the employment and educational status of GED graduates in a Kentucky learning center and provides some significant results. Thirty percent of the adults who completed the program were homemakers when the high school completion program began.

[24]Fay Byrd et al., "A Comparison of the Educational Success of GED Recipients and Traditional High School Graduates in Selected Areas at Wilkes Community College (North Carolina)," a practicum presented to Nova University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 1973, p. 42.

[25]Claude V. Ayers, "A Study to Compare the Academic Success of General Educational Development Test Graduates and Traditional High School Graduates at Surry Community College," Open Door, 11 (Winter 1975), 13.

Thirty-three percent were employed on a full-time basis and twenty-five percent were unemployed. After completion of the GED program the number of full-time homemakers decreased from thirty percent to nineteen percent. The number employed on a part-time basis decreased from eleven percent to ten percent. The number of full-time employed increased from thirty-three percent to forty-eight percent. Seventeen percent of the respondents in Nave's study reported they had been able to get a better job and six percent had received a promotion with present employers. Six percent reported they had become full-time students. Sixty percent of the respondents in Nave's study reported that they planned to continue their education at some level. Thirty-one percent indicated they planned to pursue college level work, and twenty-nine percent expected to take either vocational training or on-the-job training.[26] Ninety-seven percent of the respondents in Nave's study indicated that the time spent in preparing for the GED Test had proven worthwhile. Fifty-three percent indicated they "would have better job and educational opportunities" as a result of having passed the GED Test.[27]

[26]Wallace K. Nave, "A Follow-up Study of Adults Passing the General Education Development Test Upon Completion of Preparation in a Kentucky Adult Learning Center During Fiscal Year 1973," Diss. Western Kentucky University 1974, pp. 3-18.

[27]Nave, p. 34.

Jack Jay Nelson completed a follow-up appraisal of GED Test examinees at McLennan Community College, Waco, Texas. Nelson's study postulates that recipients of high school equivalency certificates (GED) would be influenced to take advantage of McLennan Community College's educational and training programs. His study reveals that over thirty-five percent of the survey respondents took the GED Test with the intent of continuing post-high school studies. Approximately twenty-seven percent reported that they took the GED Test for vocational reasons, and thirty-six percent listed "other" reasons for taking the GED Test. The study shows further that over eighty-four percent of the respondents did pursue college (including vocational-technical and noncredit) courses. The following responses indicate how Nelson's respondents believed passing the GED helped them:

1. Over twenty-seven percent reported increased income.
2. Approximately thirty-four percent indicated that they had a better outlook on life.
3. Fifty-nine percent were encouraged to get more education.
4. Twenty-nine percent reported that they qualified for a better job.
5. About seventeen percent checked that the GED certificate qualified them for advancement in the same job.

6. Five percent indicated that the GED certificate had not helped them.[28]

Nell Malley and Mary Charuhas' study states that over fifty percent of the sample taken from graduates from the College of Lake County's GED program continued their education at that institution. Only twenty-eight percent of the sample group did not continue formal study in some manner. Mally and Charuhas' study, which includes a survey of area personnel managers, provides the following results:

1. Eighty-five percent of the area personnel managers accepted the GED certificates as equivalent to the traditional high school diploma.

2. Only one (four percent) of the area personnel managers did not accept the GED certificate as a substitute for a high school diploma.

3. One hundred percent of those area personnel managers who required a high school diploma accepted the GED as equal to a high school diploma.[29]

While the amount of literature available regarding the educational and employment growth of GED graduates is limited, available studies indicate that GED graduates expect to be successful in both their occupational and

[28]Jack Jay Nelson, "A Follow-up Appraisal of Selected General Educational Development Test Examinees at McLennan Community College, Waco, Texas," Master of Science Thesis American Technological University 1975, pp. 16-27.

[29]Nell Malley and Mary Charuhas, "Survey: Perceptions of the College of Lake County's GED Program as Seen by Former Students and Area Personnel Managers," Paper presented to Lake County College, 1977, pp. 14-68.

educational endeavors. A study by Lutaf Dhanidina and William E. Griffith indicates clearly that program participants expect their income to increase after acquiring the GED certificate. The participants also expect to undertake more schooling and training to help them qualify for promotions.[30] Dhanidina and Griffith indicate that movement in occupations might "necessitate acquisition of further training and/or schooling."[31] The participants seemed to believe that the acquisition of a high school equivalency certificate was essential for their educational and occupational advancement. This belief appears characteristic of adults in studies addressing the subject.

[30]Lutaf Dhanidina and William S. Griffith, "Cost and Benefits of Delayed High School Completion," Adult Education, 25 (Summer 1975), 217-225.

[31]Dhanidina and Griffith, p. 117.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES AND METHODOLOGY

This research study of a random selection of GED graduates for the 1977-1978 academic year is primarily descriptive in design. I surveyed literature to determine the extent of knowledge about employment and educational growth of GED graduates. Also, I reviewed literature relative to the educational and employment growth of public school graduates.

I developed a survey instrument and tested it for reliability and validity. I interviewed the four learning laboratory coordinators at SCC, three students working toward completion of high school through the individualized learning laboratory, and three graduates of the GED program. Each person interviewed was asked to provide ideas and questions which should be included on an employment and educational growth survey of GED graduates. I reviewed thirty-two instruments to determine form design and question sequence. A review of A Manual for Developing Student Follow-up Studies in Community Colleges and Technical Institutes proved especially helpful.[1] A survey

[1]Charles B. Sutton, A Manual for Developing Student Follow-up Studies in Community Colleges and Technical

instrument was developed using the above sources. To establish validity I distributed the initial instrument to members of the administrative staff at SCC with a memorandum (see Appendix A) requesting each person to evaluate the items on the survey in relation to the research questions stated in the memorandum. The revised survey instrument contains these suggestions and comments (see Appendix B).

I sent the survey instrument to a random sample of ten Surry Community College GED graduates from the 1977-1978 academic year. Each GED graduate was asked to complete the survey and return it to SCC in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope. All ten GED graduates completed and returned the survey instrument.

After three weeks, the survey instrument was sent a second time to the same selection of ten GED graduates along with a second letter requesting that each graduate complete and return the survey (see Appendix B). The second letter emphasized the importance of the second administration of the survey.

Each individual's first completed survey form was compared with his or her second survey form to determine any differences in item responses. No differences existed

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Institutes (Raleigh, NC: State Board of Education, Department of Community Colleges, 1977), pp. 1-32.

in Part I (Personal Information) between the two administrations of the survey. In Part II of the survey (Employment) two differences emerged. On item F one individual rated the instruction she received in the GED program in relation to its usefulness to her present occupation as 1 (instruction was very good) on the first administration of the survey but changed her response to 2 (instruction was good) on the second administration. The second change occurred when a respondent changed his response on item G. On this item he changed his response on "rate the importance the GED certificate is expected to have on your future employment status" from 2 (certificate will be important) to 1 (certificate will be very important).

Items E and F in Part III (Education) provided for five possible responses. A few variations appeared in survey forms after each individual's responses on the second administration were compared with his or her responses on the first administration. To make a comparison of the variations in items E and F, Part III, each response was assigned a number value ranging from 5 (very good) to 1 (no value). Tables 1 through 4 present the results of this comparison. Tables 1 and 2 show variations on item E (Part III) in the survey. Tables 3 and 4 reveal variations on item F. Only the four survey forms which reflected different responses appear in the tables.

TABLE 1

INITIAL SURVEY RESPONSES OF FOUR PARTICIPANTS RELATIVE TO EACH ONE'S RATING OF INSTRUCTION PROVIDED IN PREPARATION TO COMPLETING THE GED PROGRAM (ITEM E, PART III)

Survey Form	Ratings of Subject Areas				
	English	Social Studies	Natural Sciences	Literature	Math
A	5	5	5	5	5
B	4	4	3	4	4
C	4	4	4	4	5
D	4	3	3	3	4
Totals	17	16	15	16	18
Mean Score	4.3	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.5

TABLE 2

SECOND SURVEY RESPONSES OF FOUR PARTICIPANTS RELATIVE TO EACH ONE'S RATING OF INSTRUCTION PROVIDED IN PREPARATION TO COMPLETING THE GED PROGRAM (ITEM E, PART III)

Survey Form	Ratings of Subject Areas				
	English	Social Studies	Natural Sciences	Literature	Math
A	4	5	4	5	4
B	4	4	4	4	4
C	4	4	4	4	5
D	4	4	4	4	4
Totals	16	17	16	17	17
Mean Score	4.8	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.3

TABLE 3

INITIAL SURVEY RESPONSES OF FOUR PARTICIPANTS RELATIVE TO EACH ONE'S RATING FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE GED PROGRAM AT SCC (ITEM F, PART III)

Survey Form	Rating of Educational Services				
	Course Materials	Instruction	A-V Aids	Counseling	Library
A	4	4	3	3	4
B	5	4	4	4	4
C	4	3	4	4	4
D	5	5	5	5	5
Totals	18	16	16	16	17
Mean Score	4.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.3

TABLE 4

SECOND SURVEY RESPONSES OF FOUR PARTICIPANTS RELATIVE TO EACH ONE'S RATING FOR THE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE GED PROGRAM AT SCC (ITEM F, PART III)

Survey Form	Rating of Educational Services				
	Course Materials	Instruction	A-V Aids	Counseling	Library
A	4	4	4	3	4
B	5	4	3	4	4
C	4	4	4	4	4
D	5	5	4	5	5
Totals	18	17	15	16	17
Mean Score	4.5	4.3	3.8	4.0	4.3

Comparison of the change in value ratings of the two items shows a change of no more than one value point on any section. Based on my observation that few differences in responses existed between the initial and the second survey and my observation of the small number value of those changes, I concluded that the reliability of the survey instrument had been established.

The GED examiner's office housed approximately one hundred GED graduate folders. Fifty GED graduates, selected at random, comprise the sample group for this study. A letter requesting each of these fifty GED graduates to help with the study and a stamped, addressed envelope accompanied the survey form mailed to the selected GED graduates (see Appendix B).

After two weeks, I attempted to contact by telephone those selected for this study who had not returned the survey form. A second letter and a second survey form were mailed to individuals who had not returned the survey and who could not be reached by phone at the end of the two week period (see Appendix B).

I relate the information obtained from the administration of the survey to the corresponding research questions in terms of the most appropriate statistical treatment of each individual survey item (Chapter IV). I list the number of responses obtained for each possible answer in the survey. To explain the survey results, I employ percentages where appropriate and calculate mean scores

as needed. I present the results in tables (Chapter IV) and relate results to previous findings (Chapter V) where helpful.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Results of this study derived from the responses of 36 GED graduates to a survey I developed with the help of 4 learning laboratory coordinators and 3 GED graduates from SCC. Survey forms were mailed to 50 GED graduates from SCC for the 1977-78 academic year. Seven of the 50 survey forms were returned undeliverable. Seven other survey forms were delivered but not returned. Thirty-six, 83.72 percent, of the deliverable survey forms were completed and returned for use in this study.

Of the 7 survey forms which were delivered but not returned, 5 were mailed to female graduates and 2 to male graduates. The age range of the 7 nonrespondents did not appear different from the 36 respondents. No geographic or other apparent differences were observed between respondents and nonrespondents. Because of the high percentage of survey responses and because no differences appeared between nonrespondents and respondents, the percentage of survey responses was considered sufficient for this study.

Of the 36 GED graduates responding to the survey, 28 (77.78 percent) were female and 8 (22.22 percent) were male. Twenty-nine graduates were married; 4 graduates,

single; and 3, divorced. The group ranged in age from 20 to 62 years. The mean age was 32.5 years (see Table 5).

This study addressed 3 research questions. The first question pertained to the value of the GED program in helping graduates gain employment, receive job promotions, or receive salary increases. This section of the study involved obtaining and presenting the following information:

1. Employment status of respondents by total group, by sex, and by age.

2. Length of employment of GED graduates.

3. Weekly salary range of the total group, of female graduates, of male graduates, and of age group.

4. The weekly salary increase respondents attributed to completing the GED program.

5. The effect of completing the GED program on graduates' occupations.

6. Graduates' ratings of instruction in relation to its usefulness in their present occupations.

7. Graduates' ratings of the GED certificate's importance on future employment.

8. Respondents' recommendations of the GED program to other adults who want to improve their employment status.

In Part II, item A, of the survey instrument I asked respondents to indicate their employment status. The employment status of GED graduates was determined from the survey responses and presented in Table 6. The employment

TABLE 5

PERSONAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS

Respondent	Age	Sex	Marital Status
1	20	Female	Divorced
2	20	Female	Married
3	20	Male	Married
4	21	Female	Married
5	22	Female	Married
6	23	Female	Single
7	23	Male	Single
8	23	Female	Married
9	24	Female	Single
10	25	Female	Divorced
11	25	Female	Married
12	26	Female	Married
13	26	Male	Married
14	28	Female	Married
15	29	Female	Married
16	29	Female	Married
17	31	Female	Divorced
18	31	Female	Married
19	31	Female	Single
20	32	Female	Married
21	33	Male	Married
22	33	Male	Married
23	34	Male	Married
24	35	Female	Married
25	35	Female	Married
26	36	Female	Married
27	38	Female	Married
28	39	Female	Married
29	39	Male	Married
30	42	Female	Married
31	44	Female	Married
32	44	Female	Married
33	46	Female	Married
34	48	Male	Married
35	53	Female	Married
36	62	Female	Married

TABLE 6

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Employment Status	Number	Percentage*
Employed, full time	21	48.84
Employed, part time	5	11.63
Unemployed	4	9.30
Unemployed, seeking employment	2	4.65
In college	9	20.93
Other	2	4.65

*Percentages are based on 43 responses.

status of respondents varied with at least 2 responses in each of the 6 categories. Since 7 people checked 2 responses, this item gathered 43 responses. The category receiving the most of the 43 responses (48.84 percent or 21 responses) was employed, full time. Five respondents or 11.63 percent marked part-time employment. Four graduates responded that they were unemployed and 2 reported unemployed, seeking employment. The second highest percentage appeared in the category labeled in college which received 20.93 percent of the responses. One respondent who reported she was unemployed indicated by written comment that she helped her husband operate a private business. One respondent wrote that she was disabled. Of the 7 people who checked 2 responses each, 6 were employed on either a full-time or part-time basis while in college. One of these 7 checked unemployed and in college.

A comparison of the employment status of the female graduates with male graduates appears in Table 7. Seventy percent of the male graduates reported they were employed on a full-time basis compared with 42.42 percent of the female graduates. Of the female graduates, 15.15 percent were employed part time but no male graduate reported part-time employment. No male graduate reported unemployment but 12.12 percent of the female graduates checked unemployed. Two of these 4 female respondents, however, reported by written comment that they helped their husbands in private businesses. Two men and 7 women reported that they attend college.

TABLE 7

A COMPARISON OF EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FEMALE GRADUATES WITH MALE GRADUATES

Employment Status	Male	Percentage*	Female	Percentage*
Employed, full time	7	70.00	14	42.42
Employed, part time	0	0.00	5	15.15
Unemployed	0	0.00	4	12.12
Unemployed, seeking employment	1	10.00	1	3.03
In college	2	20.00	7	21.21
Other	0	0.00	2	6.06

*Percentages are based on 10 males responses and 33 female responses.

Table 8 presents the employment status of respondents by age range. The 21 respondents (48.84 percent) who reported their employment status as full time were in the first 6 age ranges from 20 to 49 years. The 5 respondents who reported part-time employment were distributed throughout the age ranges and included both the youngest and the oldest age range. The 4 respondents who were unemployed fell in the first 2 age ranges which included ages 20 to 29. One of the 2 respondents seeking employment was in the youngest age range (20-24) and 1 was in the 40 through 44 range.

Part II, item B of the survey instrument asked respondents to check the length of time employed in their present jobs. Twenty-six graduates were employed. I calculated the length of employment of these 26 graduates in their present occupations (see Table 9). No attempt was made in Table 9 to separate those 21 GED graduates who reported their employment status as full time from the 5 graduates who reported part-time employment status. Of the 26 employed graduates, 42.31 percent reported holding their present occupation over 2 years. Another 34.62 percent of the group reported working their present job 1 through 2 years and 23.08 percent reported length of employment in their present job to be in the 0 through 11 month range.

Part II, item C asked respondents to indicate their pre-tax, weekly salary. Weekly salaries of the 26 employed respondents were distributed throughout the 7 salary ranges

TABLE 8

EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE RANGE

Age Range	Employed Full Time	Employed Part Time	Unemployed	Unemployed Seeking Employment	In College	Other	Total
20-24	5	1	2	1	3	0	12
25-29	4	1	2	0	0	0	7
30-34	5	1	0	0	3	0	9
35-39	4	0	0	0	0	2	6
40-44	2	0	0	1	2	0	5
45-49	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
50-54	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
55-59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
60-64	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	21	5	4	2	9	2	43

TABLE 9

LENGTH OF RESPONDENTS' PRESENT EMPLOYMENT

Length of Employment	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
0-11 months	6	23.08
1-2 years	9	34.62
Over 2 years	11	42.31

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 26 responses.

included on the survey form. The lowest weekly salary range included in the survey was $100 or less and the highest weekly salary range was $351 or more. Table 10 presents the total number of responses and the percentage of responses in each salary range. Of the respondents, 19.23 percent indicated a weekly salary of $100 or less and 7.69 percent indicated a weekly salary of $351 or more. The average weekly salary of employed respondents fell in the $151 through $200 range. A majority, 80.77 percent, of the responses were in the lowest 3 salary ranges. Note that 5 of the 26 employed graduates were employed on a part-time basis. Table 11, which presents the weekly salary of employed respondents categorized by the sex of the respondent, shows significance of this number of part-time workers. The 5 part-time employees were females and comprised 26.32 percent of the total number of employed female respondents as indicated in Table 11. The average weekly salary range for employed female respondents fell in the $101 through

TABLE 10

WEEKLY SALARY OF EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS

Weekly Salary Range	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
$100 or less	5	19.23
$101-$150	8	30.77
$151-$200	8	30.77
$201-$250	1	3.85
$251-$300	1	3.85
$301-$350	1	3.85
$351 or more	2	7.69

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 26 responses.

TABLE 11

WEEKLY SALARY OF EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS CATEGORIZED BY SEX

Weekly Salary Range	Male	Percentage*	Female	Percentage*
$100 or less	0	0	5	26.32
$101-$150	0	0	8	42.11
$151-$200	2	28.57	6	31.58
$201-$250	1	14.29	0	0
$251-$300	1	14.29	0	0
$301-$350	1	14.29	0	0
$351 or more	2	28.57	0	0

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Male percentages are based on 7 responses. Female percentages are based on 19 responses.

$150 range. The average weekly salary for employed male respondents ranged from $251 through $300. A higher average weekly salary for male employees is indicated even when the 5 part-time female employees are excluded from the calculation. Of the male employees, 57.15 percent indicated weekly salaries exceeding $251. No female employee indicated a weekly salary above $251. All female employees indicated a weekly salary of below $201. Of the male employees, 28.57 percent indicated a weekly salary below $201.

Table 12 presents a frequency distribution of respondents' weekly salaries by age groups. The ages of the respondents were placed in ranges from 20 to 64 years. Respondents' weekly salaries ranged from $100 or less through $350 or more. The 6 people (23.07 percent) in the youngest age range (20-24 years) fell into the 3 lowest salary ranges of $200 or less. The weekly salaries of 2 respondents (7.69 percent) fell into the highest salary range of $350 or more. One of these respondents was in the 25 through 29 age range and the other fell in the 30 through 34 age range. Twenty-one respondents (80.75 percent) were in the 4 youngest age ranges; this included people younger than 40. Of these 21 people the weekly salary of 17 fell into the salary ranges of below $201 per week and 4 of the 21 into salary ranges above $250. Five of the respondents (19.22 percent) were in the 5 oldest age ranges. Four of these respondents indicated a weekly salary below $201 and

TABLE 12

WEEKLY SALARY OF RESPONDENTS CATEGORIZED BY AGE RANGE

Salary Ranges	Age Ranges									Total Responses
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	
$100 or less	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
$101-$150	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	8
$151-$200	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	8
$201-$250	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
$251-$300	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
$301-$350	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
$350 or more	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Totals	6	5	6	4	2	2	0	0	1	26
Percentages*	23.07	19.23	23.07	15.38	7.69	7.69			3.84	97.97

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error.

the other checked the salary range from $201 through $250. The weekly salary range of 80.76 percent of the total number of employed respondents fell in the salary ranges below $201. Of the total number responding, 15.38 percent fell in the salary ranges from $251 through $350 or more.

A pertinent question regarding the value of the GED certificate involved the amount of salary increase respondents attributed to their completing the GED program. Graduates responded to this question in Part II, item D. Table 13 shows that 11.54 percent of the employed respondents reported a weekly salary increase of $1 through $25. Another 3.85 percent indicated an increase of $51 through $75 per week and 3.85 percent reported an increase of $126 or more. Of the 26 employed respondents, 80.77 percent reported no salary increase due to their completing the GED program. Note the written comments on the survey forms of 3 GED graduates who reported no weekly salary increases attributed to completing high school through the GED program:

1. "I still have the same job and no high school diploma is required in this job. I haven't applied for a different job."
2. "My job doesn't require a high school education."
3. "I'm still on the same job part time and going to college. My part-time job doesn't require a high school diploma."

Table 14 compares male and female respondents' weekly salary increases attributed to completing the GED program. One male respondent indicated his weekly salary increased

TABLE 13

AMOUNT OF INCREASE OF WEEKLY SALARY WHICH RESULTED FROM RESPONDENTS COMPLETING THE GED

Amount of Increase	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
None	21	80.77
$1-$25	3	11.54
$26-$50	0	0
$51-$75	1	3.85
$76-$100	0	0
$101-$125	0	0
$126 or more	1	3.85

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 26 responses.

$126 or more as a result of completing the GED program. There were no female responses in this category. One male respondent (14.29 percent) and 2 female respondents (10.53 percent) indicated a salary increase of from $1 through $25. Of the respondents, 89.47 percent of the females compared with 57.14 percent of the males indicated no increase in salary attributed to completing the GED program. Approximately 16 percent of the total number of employed female respondents reported by written comment that their jobs did not require a high school diploma and they had elected, thus far, not to apply for another job. Of the male respondents, 42.85 percent reported some

TABLE 14

AMOUNT OF INCREASE OF WEEKLY SALARY WHICH RESULTED FROM RESPONDENT COMPLETING THE GED, CATEGORIZED BY SEX

Amount of Increase	Male	Percentage*	Female	Percentage*	Total
None	4	57.14	17	89.47	21
$1-$25	1	14.29	2	10.53	3
$26-$50	0	0	0	0	0
$51-$75	1	14.29	0	0	1
$76-$100	0	0	0	0	0
$101-$125	0	0	0	0	0
$126 or more	1	14.29	0	0	1

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Male percentages are based on 7 responses and female percentages are based on 19 responses.

amount of salary increase, while 10.53 percent of the female respondents reported some amount of salary increase due to receiving the GED certificate.

I asked survey respondents to indicate how completing the GED program helped them in their present occupations (Part II, item E). Table 15 presents the 26 employed GED graduates' responses. Of the employed respondents, 34.62 percent indicated that completing the GED program helped them gain employment and 15.38 percent indicated that obtaining the GED certificate helped them get promotions. Another 19.23 percent reported they received a raise in salary as a result of completing the GED program; however,

TABLE 15

GED CERTIFICATE'S EFFECT ON GRADUATES' OCCUPATION

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Helped me gain employment	9	34.62
Helped me get a promotion	4	15.38
Helped me get a raise	5	19.23
Did not help me	8	30.77

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 26 responses.

30.77 percent indicated the GED certificate did not help in their present occupation. The latter group's comments written on the survey form seemed significant. These comments follow:

1. "I don't want to disappoint you but the GED didn't help me to get a job promotion or raise since I'm self-employed."
2. "I help my husband in his business."
3. "My job is working in a mill and I have worked at this same job for several years."
4. "I am employed part time while in college."

Table 16 shows the GED certificate's effect on graduates' occupations by respondents' sex. Responses show that the GED certificate helped 11.11 percent of the males and 47.06 percent of the females gain employment. Responses indicated that the GED certificate helped 33.33 percent of the males and 5.88 percent of the females gain a promotion.

TABLE 16

GED CERTIFICATE'S EFFECT ON GRADUATES' OCCUPATIONS, CATEGORIZED BY SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Responses	Male	Percentage*	Female	Percentage*
Helped me gain employment	1	11.11	8	47.06
Helped me get a promotion	3	33.33	1	5.88
Helped me get a raise	3	33.33	2	11.76
Did not help me	2	22.22	6	35.29

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 9 male and 17 female responses.

One-third (33.33 percent) of the male respondents and 11.76 percent of the female respondents believed the GED certificate helped them get a raise. Responses indicated that 22.22 percent of the males and 35.29 percent of the females did not believe the GED certificate helped them in their occupations.

To determine the value of the GED program in relation to graduates' occupations, I asked each graduate in the sample group to rate the usefulness of the GED instruction in relation to its usefulness in the respondent's present occupation. Out of 24 responses, 41.67 percent rated the instruction very good and 25 percent rated the instruction good; however, 12.50 percent (3) of the respondents reported the instruction in the GED program was of no value to them

in their present occupation (see Table 17). These 3 respondents wrote the following comments on their survey forms:

1. "I own my own business."
2. "I help my husband on the farm."
3. "My job does not require an education."

TABLE 17

GRADUATES' RATINGS OF GED INSTRUCTION IN RELATION TO ITS USEFULNESS IN THEIR PRESENT OCCUPATIONS

Ratings	Assigned Value	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Instruction was very good	5	10	41.67
Instruction was good	4	6	25.00
Instruction was average	3	5	20.83
Instruction was poor	2	0	0
Instruction was of no value	1	3	12.50

*Percentages are based on 24 responses.

Table 18 reveals the ratings of 36 respondents in regard to the importance they believed the GED certificate will have on their future employment status (Part II, item G). Responses indicated that 61.11 percent believed the certificate very important to their future employment status and 27.78 percent believed the certificate would be important. Two respondents, 5.56 percent, believed the certificate would be of little importance and the same percentage (5.56 percent) indicated the certificate would

TABLE 18

IMPORTANCE GED CERTIFICATE IS EXPECTED TO HAVE ON FUTURE EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Certificate will be very important	22	61.11
Certificate will be important	10	27.78
Certificate will be of little importance	2	5.56
Certificate will be of no importance	2	5.56

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 36 responses.

be of no importance to their future employment status. One of the respondents who indicated the GED program would be of no importance in future employment reported she was disabled and retired and, therefore, did not perceive herself to have a future occupation.

Table 19 compares responses regarding the importance of the GED certificate on recipients' present occupations with anticipated importance on future employment status. Eighteen respondents, 69.23 percent, indicated that the GED certificate was important to some degree in their present occupation. This percentage increased to 94.44 percent when GED graduates were asked to indicate importance in their future occupations. Note again that one respondent counted in the 5.56 percent (no importance) reported she was disabled and retired.

TABLE 19

A COMPARISON OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GED CERTIFICATE ON RECIPIENTS' PRESENT OCCUPATIONS WITH EXPECTED IMPORTANCE OF CERTIFICATE ON RECIPIENTS' FUTURE OCCUPATIONS

Occupational Status	Number of Responses Marked Important (to some degree)	Percentage of Responses	Number of Responses Marked No Importance	Percentage of Responses
Present	18	69.23	8	30.77
Future	34	94.44	2	5.56

Table 20 examines further GED graduates' responses to the importance of the GED certificate on future employment status. This table indicates the responses according to respondents' sex. Note that 75 percent of the males believed the GED certificate would be very important to their future employment compared with 57.14 percent of the female graduates. Of the male respondents, 12.50 percent checked will be important compared with 32.14 percent of the female respondents. A closer comparison of the male and female respondents showed 87.50 percent of the males and 89.28 percent of the females checked either will be very important or will be important. Of the female respondents, 7.14 percent believed the GED of little importance and 3.57 percent of the female respondents checked no importance. Of the male group, 12.50 percent believed the GED of no importance to their future employment status.

Table 21 presents a final item regarding employment. A large majority of the GED graduates surveyed (97.22 percent) indicated in Part II, item H, of the survey form that they would recommend the GED program to other adults who wanted to improve their employment status. The other 2.78 percent indicated they would not recommend the GED program to other adults who wanted to improve their employment status.

The second research question addressed in this study pertained to the percentage of GED graduates who were either continuing or who planned to continue their studies beyond

TABLE 20

IMPORTANCE THE GED CERTIFICATE IS EXPECTED TO HAVE ON FUTURE EMPLOYMENT STATUS CATEGORIZED BY SEX

Ratings	Number of Male Responses	Percentage* of Male Responses	Number of Female Responses	Percentage* of Female Responses
Certificate will be very important	6	75.00	16	57.14
Certificate will be important	1	12.50	9	32.14
Certificate will be of little importance	0	0	2	7.14
Certificate will be of no importance	1	12.50	1	3.57

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 8 male responses and 28 female responses.

TABLE 21

RESPONDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GED PROGRAM TO OTHER ADULTS WHO WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Yes, I would recommend the GED program	35	97.22
No, I would not recommend the GED program	1	2.78

*Percentages are based on 36 responses.

the GED program. This area of investigation also included an effort to discover how many GED graduates included enrollment at SCC in their post-high school endeavors. This part of the study involved: (1) obtaining and presenting the educational status of GED graduates surveyed, (2) obtaining and listing the future educational plans of the GED graduates surveyed.

Part III, item A of the survey instrument asked respondents to indicate their present educational status. Table 22 presents responses for this item. Twenty-five percent of the GED graduates surveyed were enrolled at SCC and no respondents were enrolled at other institutions. A majority, 75 percent, of the GED graduates surveyed were not enrolled in post-high school studies at the time they responded to the survey.

TABLE 22

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Educational Status	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC	9	25.00
Enrolled in post-high school studies at an institution other than SCC	0	0
Not enrolled in post-high school studies	27	75.00

*Percentages are based on 36 responses.

Table 23 presents further evaluation of the present educational status of the GED graduates. In this table responses are broken down and recorded according to the sex of the individual. Interestingly, percentages did not change. Twenty-five percent of both the male respondents and the female respondents were enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC when they responded to the survey.

The educational status of respondents categorized by age groups appears in Table 24. One-third of the GED graduates enrolled at SCC for post-high school studies were in the youngest age range, 20 through 24 years. All respondents enrolled at SCC for post-high school studies were in the youngest 5 age ranges of 20 through 44 years. Note, however, that 32 (88.89 percent) of the 36 respondents fell in the age ranges from 20 through 44 years.

TABLE 23

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS CATEGORIZED BY SEX

Educational Status	Number of Male Responses	Percentage* of Male Responses	Number of Female Responses	Percentage* of Female Responses
Enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC	2	25.00	7	25.00
Enrolled in post-high school studies at an institution other than SCC	0	0	0	0
Not enrolled in post-high school studies	6	75.00	21	75.00

*Percentages are based on 8 male responses and 28 female responses.

TABLE 24

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS CATEGORIZED BY AGE GROUPS

Educational Status	Age Groups 20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	Total
Enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	9
Enrolled in post-high school studies at an institution other than SCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not enrolled in post-high school studies	6	5	5	5	2	2	1	0	1	27
Total responses	9	7	7	6	3	2	1	0	1	36

These figures indicate that (1) the younger respondents had more tendency to enroll at SCC for post-high school studies and (2) the respondents were, in general, in the younger age ranges.

Item C in Part II of the survey sought answers to questions regarding respondents' future educational plans. Table 25 reveals responses to this item. One-third (33.33 percent) of the participants responding to this item indicated they planned to enroll at SCC in the future. None of the respondents indicated plans to enroll at another institution and 14.81 percent responded they did not plan to enroll at any institution for post-high school studies. A majority of respondents to this item, 51.85

TABLE 25

RESPONDENTS' FUTURE EDUCATIONAL PLANS

Educational Plans	Number of Responses	Percentage* of Responses
Plan to enroll at SCC	9	33.33
Plan to enroll at another institution for post-high school studies	0	0
Do not plan to enroll in any institution for post-high school studies	4	14.81
Plans are uncertain at this time	14	51.85

*Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding error. Percentages are based on 27 responses.

percent, were uncertain of their future plans. Nine of the total number of 36 survey respondents did not respond to this item because they were enrolled presently at SCC.

A third research question addressed in this study involved the preparation of the GED program students at SCC for post-high school studies. This part of the study included the following three areas:

1. Respondents' ratings of the GED instruction's value as preparation for post-high school studies.

2. A description of post-high school grade point averages of respondents enrolled in post-high school studies.

3. A determination of the percentages of respondents who would recommend the GED program to adults wanting to pursue post-high school studies.

In Part II, item D, of the survey, I asked GED graduates to rate the overall instruction they received in relation to how it prepared them for post-high school studies. The results of these responses appear in Table 26. A total of 45.71 percent of the graduates reported that the preparation they received for post-high school studies was very good. Another 34.29 percent rated the preparation good and 14.29 percent rated the instruction average. Only 5.71 percent of the respondents reported the preparation was of no value. No one rated the instruction poor. One person did not supply a rating to this item. To calculate a meaningful value to the responses in this

TABLE 26

RESPONDENTS' RATINGS OF THE GED INSTRUCTION IN RELATION TO HOW IT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR POST-HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

Ratings	Assigned Value	Number of Responses	Calculated Value	Percentage of Responses
Preparation was very good	5	16	80	45.71
Preparation was good	4	12	48	34.29
Preparation was average	3	5	15	14.29
Preparation was poor	2	0	0	0
Preparation was of no value	1	2	2	5.71
Totals		35	145	

item, I assigned numerical values (Table 26) to each of the 5 possible ratings. I calculated the average rating of the GED program's success in preparing students for post-high school studies to be 4.14 or slightly above the numerical value assigned to "instruction was good."

In Part III, item E, of the survey, respondents rated the 5 areas of instruction offered in the learning laboratories and covered on the GED test. Thirty-five people responded to this item. The subject areas rated included English, social studies, natural sciences, literature, and mathematics. Respondents were asked to check 1 of 5 possible ratings to each subject area--the ratings ranged from very good to no value. To calculate a meaningful response I assigned each of the 5 possible ratings a numerical value: very good, 5; good, 4; average, 3; poor, 2; and no value, 1. I calculated a mean rating in each subject area using assigned values and survey responses. Results of these calculations appear in Table 27. Mathematics received the highest mean rating of 4.40 (good). Both English and literature received a rating of good. English received a rating of 4.37 and literature received a rating of 4.14. Social studies and natural sciences each received a numerical rating of 3.94. A difference of only .46 existed between the highest mean rating and the lowest mean rating of the 5 subject areas. Each subject area received a mean rating of average or above. The majority of responses fell into the very good or good categories although social

TABLE 27

RESPONDENTS' RATINGS OF THE FIVE AREAS OF INSTRUCTION IN THE GED PROGRAM

Subject Areas	Number of Ratings in Each Response Category					Mean Ratings
	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Value	
English	17	14	4	[illegible]	0	4.37
Social studies	11	13	9	2	0	3.94
Natural sciences	9	16	9	1	0	3.94
Literature	13	14	8	0	0	4.14
Mathematics	19	12	3	1	0	4.40

studies, natural sciences, and mathematics each received at least one poor rating.

In Part III, item F, of the survey, I asked each respondent to rate each of the 5 educational services provided through the GED program at SCC. Thirty-five participants responded to this item. The 5 areas included course materials, instructional services, audio-visual aids, counseling services, and library services. I assigned each service a rating scale ranging from very good to no value. To calculate a meaningful response, I assigned each of the 5 ratings a numerical value: very good, 5; good, 4; average, 3; poor, 2; and no value, 1. I calculated a mean average for each service using assigned values and survey responses. Results of these calculations appear in Table 28. Instructional services received the highest mean rating of 4.46. Audio-visual aids received the lowest mean rating, 4.00. A difference of only .46 existed between the highest and lowest mean rating of the 5 educational services. Most of the responses fell into the very good and good categories. Instructional services did not receive a rating by respondents of below average but each of the other 4 services received at least 1 rating in the poor category.

Table 29 lists the grade point averages (GPA) reported by GED graduates enrolled in post-high school studies (Part III, item B, in the survey). GPAs were distributed throughout the grade point ranges. No one reported a D

TABLE 28

RESPONDENTS' RATINGS OF THE FIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROVIDED THROUGH THE GED PROGRAM

Educational Services	Number of Ratings in Each Response Category					Mean Ratings
	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	No Value	
Course materials	20	11	3	1	0	4.43
Instruction	20	11	4	0	0	4.46
A-V aids	12	12	10	1	0	4.00
Counseling	20	8	6	1	0	4.34
Library	14	13	6	2	0	4.11

TABLE 29

GPAs OF GED RECIPIENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE

Grade Point Range	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1.00-1.49 (D)	0	0
1.50-1.99 (D+)	2	22.22
2.00-2.49 (C)	2	22.22
2.50-2.99 (C+)	1	11.11
3.00-3.49 (B)	0	0
3.50-3.99 (B+)	2	22.22
4.00 (A)	2	22.22

average but 2 people reported a D+ average and 2 people reported an A average. A total of 22.22 percent of the students reported a GPA in the range of 1.50 through 1.99 (D+) and the same percentage reported a GPA in the range of 2.00 through 2.49 (C). Another 11.11 percent reported a GPA in the range of 2.50 through 2.99 (C+), and 22.22 percent reported a GPA in the range of 3.50 through 3.99 (B+). Two respondents, 22.22 percent, reported a GPA of 4.00 (A).

To better determine the academic success of GED graduates from SCC who enrolled in post-high school studies, I established a mid-point of each GPA range (Table 30). I multiplied the mid-point of the range for each group by the number of respondents reporting a GPA in that range.

TABLE 30

CALCULATION OF MEAN GPA OF GED RECIPIENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE

Grade Point Range	Mid-Point of Range	Number of Responses	Total of each Mid-Point Range
1.00-1.49 (D)	1.25	0	0
1.50-1.99 (D+)	1.75	2	3.50
2.00-2.49 (C)	2.25	2	4.50
2.50-2.99 (C+)	2.75	1	2.75
3.00-3.49 (B)	3.25	0	0
3.50-3.99 (B+)	3.75	2	7.50
4.00 (A)	4.00	2	8.00
Totals		9	26.25

Results showed a mean GPA of 2.92 or a C+ average. The last question on the survey instrument asked GED graduates to indicate if they would recommend the GED program to adults wanting to pursue post-high school studies. All graduates (100 percent) responded "Yes, I would recommend the GED program."

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, INTERPRETATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results of this study were derived from survey responses of 36 Surry Community College GED graduates. Twenty-eight graduates or 77.78 percent were female and 8 graduates or 22.22 percent were male. The age range of participants was 20 to 62 years and the mean age was 32.50 years. One section of the survey instrument obtained general information regarding the employment status of graduates. This section provided answers to the following question: Does graduation from the GED program help adults gain employment or receive job promotions or salary increases? Survey responses revealed that 48.84 percent of the GED graduates were employed full time, 11.63 percent were employed part time, 9.30 percent were unemployed (1 participant checked "unemployed" and by written comment indicated "retired and disabled"), 4.65 percent were unemployed and seeking employment, and 20.93 percent reported they were in college. (Note, in Table 6, respondents were permitted more than 1 response and the percentage in each area changed slightly in later survey items where only 1 response was permitted.)

Of the 26 employed graduates, 23.08 percent reported length of their present employment in the 0-11 month range, 34.62 percent reported length of their present employment in the 1-2 years range, and 42.31 percent reported length of their present employment over 2 years. The mean weekly salary for the group fell in the $151-$200 range. Male respondents had a mean weekly salary range of $251-$300 compared to a mean weekly salary range of $101-$150 for female respondents.

A majority, 80.77 percent, of employed respondents reported no increase in salary as a result of completing the GED program at SCC and 19.24 percent reported weekly increases of $1 to $126 or more attributed to completing the GED program. Of the employed GED graduates, 34.62 percent reported that completing the program helped them gain employment, 15.38 percent reported that it helped in getting a promotion, and 19.23 percent reported that completing the program helped them get a raise. Another 30.77 percent of the GED graduates said that the GED did not affect their present occupation.

The percentages changed somewhat when graduates rated the GED instruction in relation to its usefulness in their present occupation. Approximately 88 percent of the graduates rated the usefulness of the GED instruction they received to their present occupation as very good, good, or average; however, 12.50 percent rated the instruction they received in the GED program as of no value in their

present occupation. Using assigned values to this item, I determined the mean rating was 3.83 or average. When asked to rate the importance they expect the GED certificate to have on their future employment status, approximately 89 percent responded that the certificate would be either very important or important. Approximately 12 percent reported that the certificate would be either of little importance or of no importance. Of the total respondents, 97.22 percent reported they would recommend the GED program to other adults who want to improve their employment status.

A second major part of this study involved determining the percentage of 1977-1978 GED graduates enrolled in post-high school studies. Also, I determined the percentages of respondents who expect to include post-high school studies in their future plans either at SCC or at another institution. Twenty-five percent of the GED respondents were found to be enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC. The remaining percentage was not enrolled in post-high school studies. One-third (33.33 percent) of the graduates who were not enrolled in post-high school studies reported that they plan to enroll at SCC in the future. Of those not enrolled in post-high school studies, 14.81 percent had no plans to continue educational pursuits beyond the high school level, and 51.85 percent reported that their plans concerning future enrollment for post-high school studies remained uncertain.

A third major part of this study addressed the following questions:

1. Does the GED program prepare students for post-high school studies?

2. Are GED graduates who enroll in college courses successful students?

I asked GED graduates to rate the GED instructional program in relation to how they feel it prepares students for post-high school studies. Sixteen, or 45.71 percent, of the 35 participants responding to this question rated the instruction very good, 34.29 percent rated the instruction good, 14.29 rated instruction average, and 5.71 percent rated the instruction no value. The mean response rating, using assigned values of very good, 5, to no value, 1, was calculated to be 4.14 (good).

I also calculated mean ratings of instruction in 5 areas (English, social studies, natural sciences, literature, and methematics). All 5 instructional areas received mean scores of either average or good. The GED graduates rated 5 instructional services provided through the GED program at SCC. Each instructional area received a mean rating of good. I requested that GED graduates enrolled in post-high school studies indicate their grade point ranges. The mean mid-grade point range of the 9 GED graduates enrolled in post-high school studies was 2.92 (C+).

Interpretation of Results

Of the 36 respondents selected for this study, 2 (5.55 percent) were unemployed and seeking employment. Approximately 80.56 percent of the respondents were employed or in college. Approximately 42 (42.3) percent of the respondents reported working at their present job over 2 years. Another 19.23 percent of the GED graduates reported that obtaining the GED certificate resulted in salary increases and 50 percent reported that the GED had helped them to either gain employment or to get a promotion. Thus, 69.23 percent of the GED graduates improved their employment status to some degree by completing the GED program at SCC. This number is impressive in view of the short period of time, approximately 2 years, since the respondents completed the GED program. Significantly, 94.44 percent of the respondents expected completion of the GED program would have some degree of importance on their future employment status. Approximately 97 (97.22) percent of the graduates believed strongly enough in the value of the GED program for occupational growth that they indicated that they would recommend the program to other adults who want to improve their employment status. This latter statement supports the findings of researchers surveyed in the literature review.

Twenty-five percent of the GED graduates were enrolled at Surry Community College and an additional 25 percent of respondents indicated that they planned to enroll at SCC

on some future date. These percentages would indicate that the college can expect approximately 50 percent of the GED graduates to enroll for post-high school studies at SCC.

Approximately 94 (94.29) percent of the respondents indicated that the GED program prepared students to enter post-high school studies. Significantly, out of 35 responses to each of the 5 subject areas 1 person indicated that the instruction was poor in mathematics, 1 in natural sciences, and 2 people reported instruction as poor in social studies. Respondents assigned similar ratings to the 5 instructional services provided through the GED program.

The study also addressed the question: Are GED graduates who enroll in college courses successful students? Of the students who reported enrollment in post-high school studies 22.22 percent indicated a GPA in the range of 1.50 through 1.99. Another 77.78 percent reported their GPA in ranges from 2.00 through 4.00. The mean mid-point GPA for all respondents enrolled at SCC was 2.92. This mean mid-point GPA compares favorably with a study, cited earlier, indicating the GPA of 2.75 for traditional high school graduates enrolled at SCC during the 1973-1974 academic year.

Conclusions

I draw the following conclusions based on study results:

1. Graduation from the GED program at SCC was beneficial to 34.62 percent of the employed respondents in gaining employment. This finding holds particular significance in view of the stated mission of SCC to prepare each student for movement toward his or her occupational objective.

2. The GED program assisted 15.38 percent of the employed respondents in obtaining a promotion.

3. Completion of the GED program aided 19.23 percent of the employed GED respondents to receive salary increases. This figure compares with 27 percent reported in Jack Jay Nelson's study of GED graduates.[1]

4. The GED program proved valuable for those respondents who are either enrolled presently or who plan to enroll in post-high school studies. The survey results indicate that 50 percent of SCC's GED graduates may be expected to enroll in post-high school studies.

5. This study's findings support earlier studies by Fay Byrd and other researchers who found that GED graduates compare well in academic success with traditional

[1] Jack Jay Nelson, "A Follow-up Appraisal of Selected General Educational Development Test Examinees at McLennan Community College, Waco, Texas," Master of Science Thesis American Technological University 1975, pp. 16-27.

high school graduates.[2] A significant number of GED graduates are doing well in college work at SCC.

Based on these conclusions, I suggest that the GED program at SCC holds significance for area non-high school graduate adults who want to improve their occupational and educational status. Further, results of this study indicate that the GED program graduate is a worthy prospect for both employment and for recruitment into college level programs. Results of this study could prove particularly important to the economic growth of SCC's service area and to the fulfillment of SCC's commitment to help meet the educational needs of the neglected species--the adult learner.[3]

Recommendations for the Improvement of Practice, Strategies for Diffusion, Implementation and Change

Based on the results of this study, I offer the following recommendations:

1. College administrators, college instructors, college counselors, and college learning laboratory coordinators should emphasize through speeches, news media, and college

[2]Fay Byrd et al., "A Comparison of the Educational Success of GED Recipients and Traditional High School Graduates in Selected Areas at Wilkes Community College (North Carolina)," a practicum presented to Nova University, Fort Lauderdale, FL, 1973, p. 42.

[3]Malcolm Knowles, The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species (Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Co., 1973), n.p.

publications the potential worth of the GED program on the educational and employment growth of non-high school graduate adults.

2. College administrators should continue to improve the instructional program and the educational services available for adult non-high school graduates at SCC through both annual program evaluation and financial support.

3. Learning laboratories for GED completion should be located in as many different locations in the college service area as needs require.

4. SCC should implement an active and continuing program for recruitment of both adult non-high school graduates for the GED program and GED graduates for college-level work.

I will make the information obtained from this study available to non-high school graduates in the college service area, to counselors at SCC, to the college administrators, college instructors, employers, and prospective employers in the college service area. Faculty and staff members will receive copies of the abstract of this study through the SCC "newsletter." I will make information taken from the results available, in brief form, to individualized learning laboratory students. I will release this information to employers, prospective adult students (prospective GED students and GED graduates who may be interested in other SCC programs), and the general public in Surry and

Yadkin counties through area newspapers. I will make copies of the abstract available to editors of various North Carolina community college publications. A copy of the Major Applied Research Project will be presented to the president of SCC for his information and for eventual housing in the college library. This information will help make each of these groups aware of the potential value of Surry Community College's GED program on the employment and educational growth of prospective graduates. I expect this information to help increase both recruitment and retention of students in the GED program at SCC. I expect the results of this study to increase awareness of the importance of providing educational programs and monies for non-high school graduate adults in the academic, employment, and general public communities.

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APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM TO ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Memorandum

To: Administrative Staff

From: Claude V. Ayers, Dean of Continuing Education

Subject: Survey Instrument

Date: 2 January 1980

I am in the process of cómpleting a research proposal for a Major Applied Research Project. An important part of the proposal is the construction of the survey instrument. The attached survey instrument is designed to measure the educational and employment success of General Educational Development (GED) graduates of Surry Community College.

The survey instrument is expected to provide accurate information for the following research questions:

1. Does graduation from GED program help adults gain employment or receive job promotions or salary increases?

2. What percentage of the GED graduates include post-high school studies in their plans? How many of these adults plan to enroll for post-high school studies at Surry Community College?

3. Does the GED program prepare students for post-high school studies? Are GED graduates who are enrolled in college courses successful students?

You can help me to establish the validity of the survey instrument by reading the research questions and considering each question in relation to the appropriate survey items. Please write on the survey form any suggestions or comments which you believe would improve the study and return the survey to my mail box by 10 January 1980.

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX B

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT INSTRUMENT AND COVER LETTERS

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Part I. Personal Information

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____

Telephone_____ Sex_____

Marital Status (circle one): Married Single Divorced

Part II. Employment

A. Check the item(s) which best describe your employment status.

____ 1. Employed, full time
____ 2. Employed, part time
____ 3. Unemployed
____ 4. Unemployed, seeking employment
____ 5. In college
____ 6. Other (please list)_____

If unemployed, please skip items B through F in Part II and continue with item G in Part II.

B. Check the item which indicates the length of your employment in your present job.

____ 1. 0-11 months
____ 2. 1-2 years
____ 3. Over 2 years

C. Check the item which indicates your present weekly salary before taxes and other deductions (this information will not be used with your name but will be used for statistical purposes only).

____ 1. $100 or less
____ 2. $101-$150
____ 3. $151-$200
____ 4. $201-$250
____ 5. $251-$300
____ 6. $301-$350
____ 7. $351 or more

D. Please check the amount of increase in your weekly salary which resulted from completing the General Education Development (GED) program.

____ 1. None
____ 2. $1 - $25
____ 3. $26 - $50
____ 4. $51 - $71
____ 5. $76 - $100
____ 6. $101 - $125
____ 7. $126 or more

E. Check the item(s) which best indicate how the GED program helped you in your occupation.

____ 1. Helped me to gain employment
____ 2. Helped me to get a promotion
____ 3. Helped me to get a raise
____ 4. Did not help me

F. Rate the instruction you received in the GED program in relation to how it may be useful to you in your present occupation. Check one item.

____ 1. Instruction was very good
____ 2. Instruction was good
____ 3. Instruction was average
____ 4. Instruction was poor
____ 5. Instruction was of no value

G. Rate the importance the GED certificate is expected to have on your future employment status. Check one item.

____ 1. Certificate will be very important
____ 2. Certificate will be important
____ 3. Certificate will be of little importance
____ 4. Certificate will be of no importance

H. Would you recommend the GED program at Surry Community College (SCC) to other adults who want to improve their employment status?

____ 1. Yes
____ 2. No

Part III. Education

A. Check one of the items below to indicate your educational status.

____ 1. Enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC
____ 2. Enrolled in post-high school studies at an institution other than SCC
____ 3. Not enrolled in post-high school studies

B. If now enrolled in college, indicate your grade point average.

____ 1. 1.00-1.49 (D)
____ 2. 1.50-1.99 (D+)
____ 3. 2.00-2.49 (C)
____ 4. 2.50-2.99 (C+)
____ 5. 3.00-3.49 (B)
____ 6. 3.50-3.99 (B+)
____ 7. 4.00 (A)

C. If not presently enrolled in college, check the item which best indicates your future educational plans.

____ 1. Plan to enroll at SCC
____ 2. Plan to enroll at another institution for post-high school studies
____ 3. Do not plan to enroll in any institution for post-high school studies
____ 4. Plans are uncertain at this time

D. Indicate the extent the GED program prepared you for continuing your education beyond the high school level.

____ 1. Preparation was very good
____ 2. Preparation was good
____ 3. Preparation was average
____ 4. Preparation was poor
____ 5. Preparation was of no value

E. Check your rating for each of the five areas of instruction provided to you in preparation for completing the GED program.

	very good	good	average	poor	no value
1. English	_____	____	_____	____	_____
2. Social Studies	_____	____	_____	____	_____
3. Natural Sciences	_____	____	_____	____	_____
4. Literature	_____	____	_____	____	_____
5. Mathematics	_____	____	_____	____	_____

F. Check your rating for each of the educational services provided through the GED program at SCC.

	very good	good	average	poor	no value
1. Course materials	_____	____	_____	____	_____
2. Instruction	_____	____	_____	____	_____
3. A-V aids	_____	____	_____	____	_____
4. Counseling	_____	____	_____	____	_____
5. Library	_____	____	_____	____	_____

G. Would you recommend the GED programs at SCC to other adults who want to pursue post-high school studies?

____ 1. Yes ____ 2. No

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

April 7, 1980

Dear GED Graduate:

I am conducting a study to measure the educational and employment success of Surry Community College GED graduates. An important part of the study involves testing the survey instrument. In order to test the reliability of my survey instrument, I have selected a group of GED graduates to complete and return the enclosed form by April 12, 1980. In approximately three weeks I will ask you to complete the survey a second time. Approximately twenty minutes will be needed each time you complete the survey instrument.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and all names will be kept strictly confidential. Your assistance will be extremely helpful, and I will appreciate your participation.

A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Claude V. Ayers

Claude V. Ayers
Dean of Continuing Education

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

April 28, 1980

Dear GED Graduate:

Your participation in the study to measure the educational and employment success of our GED graduates is very important. Thank you for completing and returning the survey form to my office about three weeks ago. The second step in the test of reliability involves requesting you to complete and to return the survey form a second time. As before, all names are kept in strict confidence. Completion of the survey will require about twenty minutes.

I am confident that your time and effort will help Surry Community College answer some of the questions from employers, educators, and prospective GED students regarding the value of the GED certificate and our individualized learning laboratory program. Please complete the attached survey form and return it in the stamped, addressed envelope by May 2, 1980.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Claude V. Ayers

Claude V. Ayers
Dean of Continuing Education

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

May 12, 1980

Dear GED Graduate:

I am conducting a study to measure the educational and employment success of Surry Community College GED graduates. This study will provide answers to the questions asked by employers, educators, and prospective students relative to the value of the GED certificate. You can help with this study by completing and returning the attached survey form. Approximately twenty minutes of your time will be needed to complete the survey items. No names of participants will be used in the study, and the completed survey forms will be kept strictly confidential.

Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I encourage you to complete the survey form and to return it in the stamped, addressed envelope by May 16, 1980.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Claude V. Ayers

Claude V. Ayers
Dean of Continuing Education

SURRY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DOBSON, NORTH CAROLINA 27017
TELEPHONE 386-8121

May 26, 1980

Dear GED Graduate:

I am conducting a study designed to measure the educational and employment success of Surry Community College GED graduates. This study will provide answers to some of the questions asked by employers, educators, and prospective students relative to the value of the GED certificate.

Approximately two weeks ago a random selection of GED graduates was asked to complete a survey form. You were one of those GED graduates selected to help with this study by completing and returning the survey form.

Since I have not received your completed survey form as of May 26, 1980, I am sending you this letter to again request your help. Participation in this study is voluntary; however, I would like to encourage you to assist me in this effort.

All names of participants will be kept strictly confidential. A survey form and a stamped, addressed envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Claude V. Ayers

Claude V. Ayers
Dean of Continuing Education

APPENDIX C

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT DATA

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Part I. Personal Information

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____

Telephone_____ Sex_____

Marital Status (circle one): Married Single Divorced

Part II. Employment

A. Check the item(s) which best describe your employment status.

21 1. Employed, full time
5 2. Employed, part time
4 3. Unemployed
2 4. Unemployed, seeking employment
9 5. In college
2 6. Other (please list)_____

If unemployed, please skip items B through F in Part II and continue with item G in Part II.

B. Check the item which indicates the length of your employment in your present job.

6 1. 0-11 months
9 2. 1-2 years
11 3. Over 2 years

C. Check the item which indicates your present weekly salary before taxes and other deductions (this information will not be used with your name but will be used for statistical purposes only).

5 1. $100 or less
8 2. $101 - $150
8 3. $151 - $200
1 4. $201 - $250
1 5. $251 - $300
1 6. $301 - $350
2 7. $351 or more

D. Please check the amount of increase in your weekly salary which resulted from completing the General Education Development (GED) program.

21 1. None
3 2. $1 - $25
0 3. $26 - $50
1 4. $51 - $71
0 5. $76 - $100
0 6. $101 - $125
1 7. $126 or more

E. Check the item(s) which best indicate how the GED program helped you in your occupation.

9 1. Helped me to gain employment
4 2. Helped me to get a promotion
5 3. Helped me to get a raise
8 4. Did not help me

F. Rate the instruction you received in the GED program in relation to how it may be useful to you in your present occupation. Check one item.

10 1. Instruction was very good
6 2. Instruction was good
5 3. Instruction was average
0 4. Instruction was poor
3 5. Instruction was of no value

G. Rate the importance the GED certificate is expected to have on your future employment status. Check one item.

22 1. Certificate will be very important
10 2. Certificate will be important
2 3. Certificate will be of little importance
2 4. Certificate will be of no importance

H. Would you recommend the GED program at Surry Community College (SCC) to other adults who want to improve their employment status?

35 1. Yes
1 2. No

Part III. Education

A. Check one of the items below to indicate your educational status.

9 1. Enrolled in post-high school studies at SCC
0 2. Enrolled in post-high school studies at an institution other than SCC
27 3. Not enrolled in post-high school studies

B. If now enrolled in college, indicate your grade point average.

0	1.	1.00-1.49	(D)
2	2.	1.50-1.99	(D+)
2	3.	2.00-2.49	(C)
1	4.	2.50-2.99	(C+)
0	5.	3.00-3.49	(B)
2	6.	3.50-3.99	(B+)
2	7.	4.00	(A)

C. If not presently enrolled in college, check the item which best indicates your future educational plans.

9	1.	Plan to enroll at SCC
0	2.	Plan to enroll at another institution for post-high school studies
4	3.	Do not plan to enroll in any institution for post-high school studies
14	4.	Plans are uncertain at this time

D. Indicate the extent the GED program prepared you for continuing your education beyond the high school level.

16	1.	Preparation was very good
12	2.	Preparation was good
5	3.	Preparation was average
0	4.	Preparation was poor
2	5.	Preparation was of no value

E. Check your rating for each of the five areas of instruction provided to you in preparation for completing the GED program.

	very good	good	average	poor	no value
1. English	17	14	4	0	0
2. Social Studies	11	13	9	2	0
3. Natural Sciences	9	16	9	1	0
4. Literature	13	4	8	0	0
5. Mathematics	19	12	3	1	0

F. Check your rating for each of the educational services provided through the GED program at SCC.

	very good	good	average	poor	no value
1. Course materials	20	11	3	1	0
2. Instruction	20	11	4	0	0
3. A-V aids	12	12	10	1	0
4. Counseling	20	8	6	1	0
5. Library	14	13	6	2	0

G. Would you recommend the GED programs at SCC to other adults who want to pursue post-high school studies?

36 1. Yes 0 2. No

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Claude V. Ayers

I completed the Bachelor of Science degree in social studies through Appalachian State University (ASU) in 1964. For the next four years my professional experience involved teaching social studies to seventh grade students at the Dobson Elementary School in Dobson, North Carolina. In fall 1968 I became assistant director of adult education at Surry Community College (SCC) in Dobson. By 1969 I completed my Master of Arts degree in counseling through ASU. My professional career changed somewhat in 1970 when I became a counselor, financial aid director, and taught psychology on a part-time basis at SCC. Two years later I was named dean of continuing education at SCC and I work presently in that capacity. I earned my third degree, an Educational Specialist degree in community college administration, through ASU in 1977. My publications include articles in the Open Door, Adults Only, and two studies in ERIC.

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